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Missouri Career Centers Receive Federal Grant To Better Serve Disabled

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao announced this week that the State of Missouri would receive a grant of \$854,392 to enhance services to persons with disabilities at Missouri Career Centers. The grant was awarded to the Missouri Department of Economic Development's Division of Workforce Development, representing a consortium of state agencies including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, Division of Special Education, Governor's Council on Disability, and Missouri Assistive Technology.

The grant will fund additional services in 88 counties in seven rural Workforce Investment Areas in Missouri through June 30, 2004. Areas covered in the grant include Northwest, Northeast, West Central, Central, Jefferson/Franklin, Southwest and Southeast.

Missouri Career Centers within these areas will purchase assistive technology and provide staff training to enhance services to persons with disabilities, use the Division of Workforce Development web site, www.greathires.org and agency brochures to promote the availability of these services, and provide specialized training to businesses on hiring persons with disabilities. The Missouri Business Leadership Network will market the benefits of hiring qualified individuals with disabilities.

"This grant will allow us to build upon our efforts to reach out to persons with disabilities and provide enhanced services to assist them in attaining their vocational goals" said Rick Beasley, acting director of the Missouri Division of Workforce Development. "The receipt of this grant is a recognition of our current efforts and our commitment to providing quality employment and training services to all Missouri workers and businesses."

Workforce investment areas are State designated areas for the delivery of employment and training services. Missouri Career Centers are one-stop centers for employment, training, and supportive services provided by a variety of state and local agencies. Although a core of services to businesses and job seekers are available at every Missouri Career Center, participating agencies vary between centers based on local resources and needs.